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SUBJECT: TAIWAN'S STOCK IS STILL HIGH IN SWAZILAND

Classified By: Ambassador Earl M. Irving for reasons 1.4 (b) and (d).

¶1. (SBU) Taiwan's recently arrived ambassador to Swaziland, Peter M. Y. Tsai, told the Ambassador October 17 that his country continued to enjoy excellent relations with the Kingdom of Swaziland. Against the backdrop of the World Food Day and World Poverty Day commemorations in Lavumisa, Swaziland, he reminded us that Swaziland is one of four remaining countries on the African continent that still maintain relations with Taiwan (the others are The Gambia, Sao Tome and Principe and Burkina Faso). One reason for the strong ties is Taiwan's assistance package to Swaziland, the size of which the Ambassador would not divulge. He noted that Taiwan's assistance placed heavy emphasis on Swaziland's agricultural sector. Taiwanese model farms here produce abundant quantities of rice and other grains, which Tsai said his embassy donated to Swazi Queen Mother Ntombi Thwala's charity at little or no cost but with great returns in good will. As the senior Taiwanese diplomat was explaining this, a truck rolled up with 500 kilos of maize meal and 500 kilos of rice, a donation to the Swazi government's event that had drawn a crowd of thousands, for which the Swazi prime minister, the keynote speaker, fulsomely thanked him.

¶2. (C) Ambassador Tsai explained that there were five Taiwanese doctors and a dentist treating patients in Mbabane's public hospitals. He said that it was difficult to recruit such medical personnel, who tended to stay no more than six months before returning to their practices back home. Tsai had given instructions to the Taiwanese health practitioners that they must treat members of the diplomatic corps who fell ill, out of concern for the country's high HIV/AIDS prevalence. The Taiwanese ambassador also stated that his country had donated a terminal to Sikhuphe, Swaziland's new international airport that is currently under construction. Separately, United Nations Resident Coordinator and UNDP Resident Representative Musinga Timothy Bandora dismissed the politically astute handouts, and confided to us that the Taiwanese neither had an aid strategy for Swaziland nor attended coordination meetings with other donors.

¶3. (SBU) The local Taiwanese community, on the other hand was generally prosperous, according to Ambassador Tsai. They mainly owned or worked in factories, some of which shipped textiles and garments to the United States under the Africa Growth and Opportunity Act provisions. Tsai reported that the Taiwanese factory owners brought in senior management from Taiwan, and hired middle management and highly skilled laborers from the resident immigrant community of the People's Republic of China (PRC). Although the PRC workers generally received half the salary of their Taiwanese supervisors, the senior Taiwanese diplomat claimed there was no tension between the two Chinese communities. He also

noted that the Swazi workers were paid less than the mainland Chinese.

¶4. (C) Biographic Note: Tsai appears to be in his mid-fifties, speaks heavily accented English, is an avid golfer, and heads an embassy with ten direct-hire Taiwanese employees, one of whom is his bodyguard. He said that his one tour in Africa had been in Malawi, but that, thanks to his academic training, he had spent the majority of his career working either in Japan or on Taiwan's relations with that country. He was surprised when the Ambassador told him could not accept an invitation to dinner at the Taiwanese Ambassador's residence. King Mswati III dubbed Tsai's predecessor, Leonard Chao, "Mashesha" (Speedy) for his ability to respond positively and quickly to his requests. Swazi government ministers, delighted at the sight of the loaded truck, broke into extemporaneous applause, ribbing Tsai good-naturedly as "Mashesha 2."

¶5. (U) Minimize Considered.
IRVING